# Coordination and Change Projects’ Most Significant Change Stories

## Reading, evaluation and discussions

You should have received individual feedback on your stories from your Management Team Basin liason person[[1]](#footnote-1). In addition, we put together a ‘selection panel’ to look at the stories submitted from the Coordination and Change (C&C) projects, similar to our suggestion for how you could go about the selection process of submitted stories from your technical projects in your basins. The suggested selection process is described in annex 1, which is a copy of the e-mail to the selection panel members. The selection panel for the MSC from the C&C projects met in person in Hartbeespoorts, South Africa, 21.01.13 (17.30-18.45). Below are the insights and lessons that came out from this meeting.

### Lessons and summary points

**All stories are significant and valuable**: We realized and acknowledged that all stories submitted are significant and most significant to you who made the decision and effort to submit them and share them with us. We find them a ‘gold mine’ of information for the metasynthesis book and other communication products. Like some of you, we did not feel comfortable with selecting any most significant one(s) eventually and make this judgment. We had a similar feeling last year when we went through the same exercise.

**Stories are of different categories and thus difficult to compare**: There were about six (out of ten) stories which could be compared as they include elements of institutionalization. Some stories had external effect and significance, while three are more of BDC internal significance. See Annex 2.

**Most of the stories were not written as standalone pieces**. Many could not be understood very well without further background reading or knowledge. With all of them it was necessary to go and read more project or BDC documents to understand the significance of a story in the given context. This came out in our discussions about some ranking of stories and where we had the biggest discrepancies in ranking (very high and very low ranking). It showed that in almost all cases a more thorough explanation of the context of the story would have raised it “scores” and ranking.

**We lacked clarity among ourselves regarding selection criteria**: We realized that our selection criteria had changed over the last twelve months related to the progress and situation the program currently finds itself in, i.e. in the last year wrapping up and working towards closure. We found that we could not consistently score and rank stories if we lacked common selection criteria.

**Our internal debate on defining selection criteria was in itself helpful:** We found the process of selecting and defining our own selection criteria very useful to realize what we are looking for in a significant story. Quite a number of our criteria overlapped and could be taken together. For example, a lot of us were looking for the level of or potential for change/ outcomes in the stories, the degree to which the stories contributed to institutionalization of our work and findings, to what extent the CPWF experience and our key messages are or have been documented in the story. The criteria of how well the story was written and how much it engaged the reader were less often and only once each.

**Reading through the MSC stories helped us prepare for the following MT program planning meeting**. One of our 2013 agenda item identified is to extract lessons and apply them. In this context and reading through other sources, e.g. outcome stories from Phase 1, Larry put forth a taxonomy of project’s outcomes as a starting point and which we would like to share with you for potential further discussions as we move along with our learning this year. The taxonomy shows that despite using outcome orientation, we have few Phase 2 projects that have produced outcomes. This should not come as a surprise as many of the projects have only been working in the field for a year or two. However, this depends also on how we define outcomes and if we maintain “outcomes” as changes in Knowledge Attitude and Skills, then we have a host of projects that are indicating these type of changes.

Here is a summary version of the taxonomy. A longer version with example projects is presented in Annex 2.

**Projects generating outcomes**:

* + **CP projects generating outcomes -** Projects with clear examples of past or forthcoming concrete and substantial outcomes in large part due to work from our Phase 2 projects. Some of these are based on Phase 1 projects or preceding non-CP projects.
  + **Pre-existing CP projects generating outcomes -** Projects with clear examples of concrete and substantial outcomes to which, however, our projects themselves contributed relatively little – we may have complementary or follow-on research but it was not our Phase 2 research that produced the outcomes.

**Projects not yet leading to outcomes**

* + **CP projects working in “action arenas” that have not yet led to outcomes -** Projects focused on action arenas often contributing to and drawing on information developed by the project – but with little evidence that the action arenas have as yet contributed to concrete and substantial outcomes. (The term ‘action arena’ is used for Multiple-Stakeholder Platforms (MSP), Innovation Platforms (IP), conversatorios, fora, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, high level exchange with policymakers, and similar places for dialogue and negotiation.)
  + **Projects producing information on technical, institutional or policy innovations but not yet leading to outcomes -** Projects that generated information on the development and performance of innovations – including the equity and scale consequences of innovations – which may or may not have been introduced into action arenas.
  + **Projects helping define problems or challenges but not yet getting to outcomes -** Projects that generated information on the nature of development challenges – including the equity and scale dimensions of these challenges – with relatively little emphasis on the development and performance of innovations to address these challenges

**Projects with a different orientation**

* + **Projects focusing on methods development -** Projects that focused on the development of methods only marginally related to development challenges or innovations to address them – often associated with CB
  + **Projects focusing on management and administration**

### What next

Some ideas and plans what we would like to do with the MSC stories from the program level. We will be looking at all the submitted MSC stories from Phase2, from round one and two, technical projects and coordination and change projects.

1) We will be looking at them and how they fit into the emerging R4D framework and will be synthesizing them into this.

2) Communications will look at them to further develop outcome stories from Phase 2 work, as you might have seen, the first set of Phase 1 projects Outcome Stories has only recently been finalized and published on the CPWF website <http://waterandfood.org/outcome-stories/>

3) They inform the work that is progressing on the Metasynthesis book and the 2013 Program Messages and related products.

It will be interesting to systematically follow-up and see how the MSC stories were utilized and seen as something useful in your basins (if at all). Some ideas we received through the BDC reports’ section on the MSCs from the technical projects.

If you have any other suggestions please let us know.

## Annex 1: E-mail invitation and process description for the selection panel

**From:** Schuetz, Tonya (CPWF), **Sent:** 14 January 2013 12:55  
**To:** Vidal, Alain (CPWF); 'Amanda Harding'; Ilse Pukinskis (ipukinsk@gmail.com); Harrington, Larry (CPWF); Williams, Timothy (IWMI-Ghana); **Cc:** Victor, Michael (CPWF); asullivan@fanrpan.org  
**Subject:** MSC C&C Projects selection panel meeting SA Pecan Manor, 21. Jan. 2013 5pm (for sundowner)

Dear Alain, Amanda, Ilse, Larry, and Tim (we are aware that Tim you will only arrive on Tues morning, but maybe you want to send us your ranking):

As you know, we collected significant change stories as part of six-monthly reporting from all the projects of the Andes, Limpopo, Mekong, Nile, and Volta Basins.  Basin Leaders selected the stories among the technical projects that they thought were the most significant, and gave their reasons. The idea was that through reading and selecting stories the basin leadership would have an opportunity to learn about what is emerging from their BDCs and reflect on its significance.  In the same way, the program team now has an opportunity to learn about what is emerging from our Coordination and Change projects and reflect on what we (at program- level) find most significant.

By making story selections and giving our reasons, we will be able to signal back to the basins what we value.  These values are – as we also learned from our last year evaluation process – often individual and differ among the panellist and it is interesting to look at the similarities and the differences in each of our own value systems. Additionally, we can start to use these as the basis for developing outcome stories and messages for work at the program level. Building upon what we have and what is coming out from the basin work. This can then be matched (and improve) the programmatic messages.

We found the selection process we followed last very insightful. We would like to take you through a similar exercise and invite you to join the selection panel for the 2012 Most significant change Stories from our Coordination and Change Projects to meet in South Africa at our Pecan Manor accommodation at **5pm on Monday 21st January 2013**.

Attached you will find a compilation of 10 stories from six basins’ C&C projects in the Word document and a suggestion for possible selection and ranking matrix in the Excel document. This is what we all need to do before we meet:

1. Read the stories first with this single question in mind: "From among all these significant changes (each story), what do you think was the most significant change of all?"
2. Make your overall selection, e.g. your 1st, 2nd, 3rd best - most significant change – one.
3. Decide your selection criteria after you have made your choice (selection criteria = why did you choose this story? what is it that makes it better than the others, or more "significant"?), and list them.
4. Systematize your ranking and evaluation including all the stories.  We suggest you use the table in the attached Excel doc\*\*, list your selection criteria (from point 3.) in column A on the left side axis, and rank each of the stories in the following columns accordingly. Fill out the table assigning a word (high – middle – low) or number (3 – 2 – 1) which grades each story for each of your criteria.
5. If possible please send this table to us before the meeting, so that we can try and compile an overview for us to look at.  We suggest you send this table only to Michael and Tonya so that the others do not look at your evaluation and your criteria as to find out our own value system.

In the meeting we will go through a process of presenting and discussing our selections and criteria, and see how much we can reach a final selection, e.g. either by consensus or majority vote. We anticipate that the meeting will last no longer than 2 hours and will be – at least last year it was - fun. In any case, the drinks will be on us.

Please let us know if there is anything we missed.

Best regards,

Michael and Tonya

\*\* the attached Excel Document has three spread sheets, one a listing overview of the submitted C&C projects’ MSCs, the suggested evaluation matrix, and one for your notes on each story.



## Annex 2 Project taxonomy for outcome generation

The taxonomy shows that despite using outcome orientation, we have few projects that have produced outcomes. The term ‘action arena’ is used for Multiple-Stakeholder Platforms (MSP), Innovation Platforms (IP), conversatorios, fora, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, high level exchange with policymakers, and similar places for dialogue and negotiation. Here is the taxonomy with an initial allocation of some projects to the seven categories:

#### 1 – CP projects generating outcomes

Projects with clear examples of past or forthcoming concrete and substantial outcomes in large part emerging from action arenas managed by our projects and information in part generated by our projects. These will often be based on work in Phase 1 or that preceded the PC.

* AN2 – MSC1 - research informs development of legislation in Peru, MSC2 - getting IFAD to fund a trust fund to implement new legislation on BSM in Peru
* AN3 – MSC1 - gender equity in conversatorios – information to negotiations to outcomes; conversatorios and information – modeling, voice to the voiceless, negotiations to outcomes
* G3 – (multiple MSC stories) – policy reconciliation allowing water management improves for polder intensification (informed by G2 and G4 and G5 - BWDB and LGED)
* PN38+51, OS14 - Addressing Public Health Issues in Urban Vegetable Farming in Ghana – policy outcomes
* PN10 – Vietnam rice vs. fish water and land allocation (OS21 - Improving food security and livelihoods at the interface between fresh and saline water in Bac Lieu, Vietnam)
* PN42 – Aditi example of groundwater policy in West Bengal

#### 2 – Pre-CP existing projects generating outcomes

Projects with clear examples of concrete and substantial outcomes to which, however, our projects themselves contributed relatively little

* AN1 – FONAGRO, preceded CP work
* L3 – goat auction b preceded Phase 2 CP work
* PN15 – slash and mulch, FAO work preceded CP Phase 1 (OS 22 - Abandoning Slash and Burn for Slash and Mulch in Central America’s Drought-Prone Hillsides)
* PN16 – aerobic rice (OS11 - Aerobic Rice: A New Crop to Help Farmers Cope with Scarce Water)

#### 3 – Work with action arenas that have not yet led to outcomes

Projects focused on action arenas often contributing to and drawing on information developed by the project – but with little evidence that the action arenas have as yet contributed to concrete and substantial outcomes

*Landscape or higher*

* L2 – MSC1 - Botswana local MOA staff wanted ex-field RWH but higher officials wanted within-field RWH, delayed project– need to get straight story from stakeholders “internal dynamics”
* Mekong projects on MSPs and HSAP
* MK1 – working with dam operators in Laos and Vietnam dam operations changes to enable more livelihoods options
* MK3 – working with dam operators to invest in constructed wetlands in reservoirs
* MK4 - Developing key messages for policymakers
* MK5 – importance and utility of MOUs with high ranking policymakers and the likelihood they will be ignored or left to lapse
* N2 – innovation platforms still searching for innovations, and ways to reconcile top-down vs. bottom resource conservation strategies

*Local*

* L2 – MSC2 - Chief wanted dam for cattle watering point, team first said ok then reconsidered, chief upset, finally only rehabilitated two hand pumps
* L2 – MSC4 - farmer field day in Lambani on RWH resulted in another community Malamulele asking for help in getting RWH going
* PN25 – companion modeling

#### 4 - Information on innovations not yet leading to outcomes

Projects that generated information on the development and performance of innovations – including the equity and scale consequences of innovations – which may or may not have been introduced into action arenas. Outcomes are at best anecdotal and very, very preliminary

* AN3 – MSC5 - information on modeled performance of new water infrastructure for Los Altos – to potentially inform discussions of “Focal Group” as yet inactive
* G2 – MSC1 - Community water management and system intensification – full technical details of opportunities – once water control in place, which requires institutional reconciliation
* L1 – MSC1 - Water from stream sand bed, investment in borehole for vegetables, gender – some topics better discussed by mixed groups, others by groups separated by gender
* L2 – MSC3 - In field RWH for subsistence maize, helped out during dry spell; Mrs. Matashingane tried RWH but too close to trees next time will use farther away from trees
* L3 - fodder better than grain crops under dry conditions, more biomass better livestock, need markets
* MK3 – Irrigation in the lower Sesan 3
* N3 – information on possible targeting of possible innovations
* OS12 - Safeguarding Livelihoods in the GaMampa Wetlands in the Limpopo River Basin
* OS26 - Corralling: A Solution for Improving Livestock Productivity in Pasture Lands Affected by Termites
* OS3 - Enhancing Water Productivity and Improving Livelihoods Through Drip Irrigation and Better Market Integration in Cambodia – IDE, institutional sustainability, value chains example (outcomes only anecdotal)
* OS5 - Maximizing Rainwater and Nutrient Use in the Volta Basin – RWH, micro-dosing, credit, crop yields from trials (little evidence of outcomes)
* OS6 - Vast saline lands reclaimed by simple technologies in coastal and inland Asia (anecdotal)

#### 5 –Information on challenges not yet leading to outcomes

Projects that generated information on the nature of development challenges – including the equity and scale dimensions of these challenges – with relatively little emphasis on the development and performance of innovations to address these challenges

* AN1 – MSC3 – the importance of flooding in Andes basins, overlooked by our projects
* AN3 – MSC3 - providing information from WEAP, helping farmers participate more effectively in Foro Agua Santa (IP), Foro itself not effective but aims to address conflict re alpine lakes (Parón)
* G4 – consequences of external drivers
* L4 - conceptualizing water governance in rainfed systems, e.g., tenure, collectors vs. others
* MK2 – challenge of living in a resettlement village
* MK2 – Quantifying water demands from development
* MK3 – Managing extreme rainfall events in reservoir cascades and consequences of failure
* N2 – participatory video, aimed at defining challenges for action arena
* N3 – long term strategies, happy strategies – long-term thinking of challenges
* OS15 - Improving Resilience Among Small-scale Fishers in the Niger River B
* V3 – on water quality problems in small reservoirs, and dysfunctional water management infrastructure downstream of small reservoir dams

#### 6 – Methods only not yet leading to outcomes

Projects that focused on the development of methods only marginally related to development challenges or innovations to address them – often associated with CB

* AN1 – MSC2 - GIS SEHR “sweeping”
* AN3 – MSC4 - capacity building in modeling for “negotiations support”
* AN3 – MSC6 - overview of application of models to generate information that in some instances may be used by discussion fora
* G1 – pulling together spatial data
* L4 – lack of clarity on research on water governance in rainfed systems

#### 7 – Management and administration

* L4 – difficulties in project management and implementation because of delayed funds release and budget cuts; problems caused to institutions and individuals
* L4 – meeting over breakfast led to joint field survey work by L2 and L4
* L5 – OLMs not grounded, focus on milestones to target outputs, not fully embraced; not visualized how activities can lead to impact; recommendations

1. We changed the term Management Team Basin Lead person to Management Team Basin Liason person to clarify the role of this person more as a bouncing board and point person than a leading role for the Basin Leader. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)